



## Donald J. Cummings

May 15, 1934 - September 28, 2024

Lifelong Educator, Donald J. Cummings, 90, of Fitchburg, MA passed away on September 28, 2024 after an illness.

Born in Milford, MA in 1934, the son of Agnes Ryan and Stanley Cummings, Don attended St. Mary's Parish Schools in Milford, Class of 1952. While serving stateside in the army, he met Bernadette, his wife-to-be, "across a crowded room" at a community dance. Their marriage began in Rhode Island while Don completed a B.A. degree from Providence College, 1959, and an M.A. degree from the University of Rhode Island, 1970. He continued to advance his career with numerous professional certification programs, serving on State Education and Youth Planning Boards, receiving a Kettering Foundation Grant to support inner city children, founding the Providence College Youth Guidance Association, and receiving membership into the Elementary Schools Principals' Association.

After teaching at the Rhode Island Department of Social Welfare in Providence, it was fate when a job opportunity opened up in Bernadette's hometown of Fitchburg, MA. Don went on to work for Fitchburg Public Schools as Principal and educator for Bartley-Nolan, South Fitchburg, Sheridan St, Crocker Elementary, and B.F. Brown. Always thinking outside the box, Don established several community learning programs and additional curriculum for his students and teachers; including an alliance with the Fitchburg Art

Museum using the museum's collections with classroom subjects, developing Children's Closet Needs to aid families, administering a student Learning and Savings Program with the I.C. Credit Union Banking Program, spearheading numerous Bilingual and equal opportunity programs, and supporting Fitchburg State University utilizing his community education programs in their curriculum.

Retiring as Principal in 1998, Don continued to share his love of education by becoming an Adjunct Professor of History and English at Mount Wachusett Community College. Don always incorporated "fun" into teaching and was known to show up in costume for some of his history lessons. He enjoyed running into former students who would recall how his support and fun teaching style helped them succeed. That fun, along with that creativity, would appear in his home life at many family events as well, where he would "round up the usual suspects"-his favorite Casablanca quote-having games, skits, poetry, humor, and song readily in hand for all in attendance to join in. Don relished these times with his family and friends.

Journeying New England with Bernie by his side; golf and laughs on the courses; reading, writing, and sharing thought-provoking quotes with his personal commentaries; cooking and leaving goodies on doorsteps; catching up with many students, co-workers, and friends while doing his rounds in his favorite stores; all add to what made Don one-of-a-kind.

Don's curiosity, creativity, and compelling conversation were well-known and will be greatly missed.

He leaves his wife Bernadette (Page) Cummings of 68 years, children: Christopher and his wife Tina Cummings of N. Reading, Tracey and her husband John Deshayes of Shrewsbury, Colleen and her husband Stephen

Hirons of Westminster, Kelly and her husband Mark Boudreau of Fitchburg, and Ryan Cummings of N.Y.C. Grandchildren: Bailey Cummings and partner Dru Levasseur, Samuel Cummings, Thomas Boudreau and his wife Haley Weinig, and Page Hirons; also numerous nieces and nephews who were great fans of Don. He was predeceased by his grandson, Andrew Boudreau, and his sisters Claire Cummings and Margaret Borruso.

Calling hours will be held in the Isabelle & Anderson Funeral Home, 316 Clarendon St., Fitchburg on Wednesday, October 2, from 4 – 7 pm. The funeral Mass will be celebrated on Thursday, October 3 in Saint Joseph Church, 49 Woodland St., Fitchburg at 10:30 am. Burial will follow in the parish cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made to Fitchburg Art Museum at [fitchburgartmuseum.org/donations](http://fitchburgartmuseum.org/donations) or by mail-185 Elm Street, Fitchburg, MA, or call 978-345-4207 ext 310.

# Cemetery Details

## St. Joseph's Cemetery

Fitchburg, MA

# Previous Events

## Calling Hours

OCT 2. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Isabelle & Anderson Funeral Home - Fitchburg  
316 Clarendon Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
(978) 343-4407

## Funeral Mass

OCT 3. 10:30 AM (ET)

St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
46 Woodland Street  
FITCHBURG, MA 01420

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ *Pete & Sheri Slattery purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Donald J. Cummings.*



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**Pete & Sheri Slattery** - October 01, 2024 at 08:17 PM

PC

“ *Our deepest sympathy to the entire family. You are all in our thoughts and prayers. Mr. Cummings was an amazing man. He was always so friendly and kind, and would always make us smile when we had an opportunity to talk with him at Mark & Kelly's. He will be missed by everyone that had the pleasure of knowing him.*

*RIP, until we meet again.*

*Love,  
Keith & Phyllis  
Cheeseman*

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**Phyllis Cheeseman** - October 01, 2024 at 03:46 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Donald J. Cummings.*



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October 01, 2024 at 12:18 PM

YT

“ Your friends from Thomson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Cummings.

Your friends from Thomson - October 01, 2024 at 12:18 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald J. Cummings.



September 30, 2024 at 04:48 PM

WC

“ William & Thaisa Clapham planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald J. Cummings.

William & Thaisa Clapham - September 30, 2024 at 04:48 PM

DD

“ Don hired me for my first teaching job at BF Brown. Supportive, encouraging and deeply caring , I have never forgotten how important he was in my career development. He will be missed by the many people who had a chance to know him.  
Dennis DeGara

Dennis DeGara - September 30, 2024 at 03:19 PM